

From: Lynda Dimmel
To: Microsoft ATR
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I think the entire antitrust case, and all of its subsequent ramifications, is nothing more than sour grapes on the part of those who cannot keep up. As a programmer working as a contractor, I see and use many products - products whose manufacturers are behind this case. Quite frankly, those products have a lot to worry about. Most are archaic languages or bastardized derivatives of legitimate languages. The reason why Microsoft products are leaders in both home and business is simple - they are better. More functional, easier to use and to learn, more powerful and have capabilities that have barely been tapped. Most of the third party software that would like to see compatibility resolved are really facsimiles of software.

As a point of reference my current project is a nightmare of Microsoft-like forms and frames appearing like, but struggling to achieve, the functionality of the real thing. Operating on source code filled with @ and other symbols that calls itself a 'scripting' code and claims compatibility with everything from HTML to Excel - well, the programming will work, but it isn't pretty. It is cumbersome and, after working with a 'real' language, is almost funny. It is one of IBM's responses to the need for a middle-ware product linking it's mainframe database with PC applications. Perhaps the problem is with the mainframe and it's producer should be striving to make the mainframe compatible vs. forcing a substandard 'link'.

If Microsoft holds a monopoly perhaps it is in ambition, talent and innovation. Please don't make them into an IBM clone - secretive, paranoid and totally devoid of everything that is technology today. See this for what it is - retaliation for being one-upped 20 years ago; retaliation for lacking the foresight to see anything except for what was directly in front of them; and the proliferation of middle-ware software houses continuing to produce substandard knock-offs of software that will only create a lack of continuity and a deep mire of sludge as all are forced to become 'compatible', to speak the same language. When looking for developer information on a Microsoft product, one can locate hundreds of sources - from the Microsoft site to sites that publish tutorials and development information to easily obtainable resource materials. When looking for developer information on an IBM Partner product where does one go????? If there's something out there that doesn't involve bringing the IBM support consultant on site - let me know because as far as I can see it doesn't exist. There's a wealth of websites all spouting a lot of Marketing chatter, but no real information. You even have difficulty finding resource manuals on their stuff! Now that's monopolizing - forcing their customers to use an 'authorized' IBM consultant 'officially' trained to do one thing. Truly

the death of inventiveness! Just another cube farm dweller in a white shirt and a black tie.

My personal analogy is that this case is like half of a football team complaining because one of the team members is working too hard and making them look bad. Rather than see the bar get raised, they want it lowered. Universal compatibility is not going to be better, it is going to limit the capabilities of technology, create confusion and vulnerability, and it is going to be more difficult for the average user to make use of their applications. Maybe IBM will get what it always wanted in the end, computers will be for big business and geeks! I should just say "Thanks for nothing!"